



Standards & Assessment

STAR Notes

California Department of Education

Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

April 2007

California Writing Standards Tests

Directions For Administration Error

On March 2, the California Department of Education (CDE) STAR Program was alerted to errors in the Writing Standards Test for Grades Four and Seven Directions for Administration (DFA) in which the directions for the previous year's genre were given in the "SAY" boxes instead of the directions for the genre being tested. (The students' writing prompt and response booklets for March 6 were correct, however.) Recognizing that the errors in the DFA could be confusing to students and teachers, STAR Program staff immediately informed Educational Testing Services (ETS) staff and worked out a plan in which ETS would inform district STAR coordinators of the errors and send them corrected pages for the DFA to distribute to their schools. ETS was also to post the corrections as "errata" pages on <http://www.startest.org> on Monday morning, March 5.

The weekend of March 3–4, the errata pages were prepared for shipping (approximately 8,000 packages) out of ETS's Concord office on Monday morning with the hope that districts would receive them in time for testing on March 6. However, despite ETS's best efforts, not all the packages made it to the schools in time. The CDE extended the testing window for the writing test through March 8 to accommodate the schools that did

not receive the corrected pages in time to test on March 6–7. ETS followed up the effort to ship the errata pages by calling and e-mailing district coordinators to alert them of the situation and to assess the level of disruption for the schools.

Because some schools tested using the original DFA, the readers of the students' papers are being trained to observe any differences in the scores of the students who tested using the original DFA and the scores of the students using the revised DFA. After the scoring of all papers is completed, a systematic comparison of students' scores will be performed to evaluate the effect, if any, of the original directions on students' scores. As soon as the CDE receives the analysis from ETS of the comparison of the writing scores, district STAR coordinators will be notified of any actions taken.

Teacher Guides for the 2006 Writing Standards Test

The teacher guides for the 2006 California Writing Standards Tests (CSTs in writing) in grades four and seven are available on the CDE Web site under "4th & 7th Grade Writing Test" at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/resources.asp>. These guides contain questions and answers about the CSTs in writing, the scoring rubrics, student responses illustrating student writing at each score point, and teacher commentaries explaining why each student's response received the score it did. Samples of writing test materials, such as the

answer documents, are available at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) STAR Program Web site at <http://www.startest.org/cst.html>.

New Postings at the California Department of Education Web Site

2007 STAR Test Information Packets

The following 2007 STAR information packets have been posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/>.

- *Understanding 2007 STAR Program Tests: Information for School District and School Staff* is to help local administrators work with their teachers and support staff to make sure they have the basic information they need to a) communicate effectively about the STAR Program with parents and guardians and students, and b) report and use results of each STAR Program test to help monitor the academic progress of students and schools.
- *Communicating with Parents and Guardians About 2007 STAR Program Tests: Resources for Use by School District and School Staff* is designed for use by school district and school administrators as they work with staff and parent leaders to prepare parent newsletters and special mailings.
- *Guides for 2007 STAR Program Tests: Information for Parents and Guardians* is for anyone who is looking for detailed information about the STAR Program, its tests, and uses of its results.

Golden State Seal Merit Diploma

In April 2004 the State Board of Education (SBE) designated STAR CST results to be used to qualify eligible pupils for the Golden State Seal

Merit Diploma (GSSMD). Each school district or charter school that confers high school diplomas is required per *Education Code* sections 51450–51455 to maintain appropriate records in order to identify students who have earned a GSSMD and to affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma and transcript for each qualifying student. GSSMD recipients will usually qualify using solely qualifying CST results; however, qualifying Golden State Examination (GSE) scores received prior to the GSE being repealed in 2003 may still be used. Eligibility criteria, forms, and information about the GSSMD are available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sr/meritdiploma.asp>.

Districts/charter schools should submit requests for insignias for eligible 2007 seniors as soon as the students are identified. The CDE began mailing requested insignias the first week of April. Requests received after April 1 will be processed and mailed in the order they are received. Districts/charter schools may also request insignias for eligible students who graduated prior to 2007 by submitting a separate *Insignia Request Form* with the Graduation Year section completed with the appropriate year. There is no deadline for submitting insignia request forms; however, districts should request insignias far enough in advance of the first graduation ceremony date in the district to allow time for the CDE to process the request and for district staff to place the insignias on the diplomas. Districts should receive insignias within two weeks from the date that the CDE receives the request.

2007 STAR Apportionment Rates

The SBE approved the following apportionment rates for the spring 2007 STAR testing:

- \$2.52 per student for completing demographic information and administering the CST–CAT/6 Survey

- \$5.00 per student for completing demographic information and administering the CAPA
- \$2.52 per student for completing demographic information and administering the STS
- \$2.44 per student for completing demographic information and administering the designated primary language test, Aprenda 3
- \$0.38 for completing demographic information for each student not tested with the CST–CAT/6 Survey, the STS, or the CAPA

Information for determining each district's or charter's STAR apportionment amount will be based on the multiple-choice answer documents submitted for scoring for the spring 2007 administration. The CDE will compile an Apportionment Information Report for each district/charter school that is testing independent of the district from the student data files produced by the testing contractor. The apportionment information reports will be mailed to superintendents or charter school administrators during late September 2007 to be signed and returned to the CDE by December 31, 2007.

Demographic Edit Alert Penalties

If any of the following data are missing (not provided during Pre-ID or hand-gridded at time of testing) for more than three percent of the CST–CAT/6 Survey, the STS, or the CAPA student answer documents submitted per school for scoring, **\$1.32** per student will be withheld from the district's/charter school's STAR apportionment.

- Gender
- Statewide Student Identifier (SSID)

- Primary Ethnicity
- California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) Enrollment—school
- CBEDS Enrollment—district
- Student's English Proficiency
- Primary Disability Code
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

The funds withheld will be paid to the contractor to process the corrected data a second time in order to produce and report test results for the district/charter school. Please note that **optional** demographic data corrections that may be requested by the district/charter school at their expense for use for Academic Performance Index (API) or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes is a separate process from the demographic edit alerts process detailed above.

2006 Apportionment Information Report Waiver Requests

District superintendents and charter school administrators whose schools tested independent of the district received STAR 2006 Apportionment Information Reports in late October 2006 to certify and return to the CDE by December 31, 2006. If a district or charter school did not return a signed 2006 STAR Apportionment Information Report to the CDE by the December 31, 2006, deadline, the district or charter school may apply for a waiver of the deadline to be approved by the SBE. The CDE cannot release payment of the apportionment funding for late reports without a waiver approved by the SBE. The specific waiver request form and instructions for state testing apportionments are available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lr/wr/othertopics.asp>. If you have

questions regarding the waiver request process, please contact Hilary Steinmetz in the Waiver Office at (916) 319-0823 or by e-mail at hsteinme@cde.ca.gov. If you have questions regarding the Apportionment Information Report, please contact Mei Tan in the Standardized Testing and Reporting Office at (916) 319-0346 or by e-mail at mtan@cde.ca.gov.

Note: Please regularly check the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program Web site at <http://www.startest.org> for updates on test administration set up, ordering materials, pre-ID, and upcoming workshops and Webcasts.